**Research Tips for Extended Essay Students**

Initial Research: Finding Background Information

1. Use Encyclopedias and Dictionaries

        It’s ok at this stage to go to Wikipedia to do some background reading and to mine the bibliography, but DO NOT use it as a source in your paper.

        Many areas of interest will have subject specific encyclopedias that are available at the universities. Check with the reference librarians.

        Use the university library websites to help guide you in choosing appropriate encyclopedias and dictionaries from their collections.

        **TIP**: Exploit bibliographies. Read the background information and note any useful sources (books, journals etc.) listed in the bibliography at the end of the encyclopedia article or dictionary entry. The sources cited in the bibliography are good starting points for further research.

        Look up sources on NovaNet and EBSCO. The reference librarians can help you get started.

Subject Specific Research: Finding Sources Related to your Topic

1. Use catalogues to find books and media
   * Determine key words that will help you narrow your search
   * Use university library catalogues (usually online)
   * Check for journal articles using EBSCO and NovaNet – these are excellent resources

1. Using Internet resources
   * It is possible to use Internet resources in your extended essay; however, you must be extremely careful in selecting reliable sources.
   * The Prince Andrew High School library subscribes to SEARCH Portfolio, which will help to connect you with quality websites.
   * Check academic researchers’ bibliographies for websites but remember, just because you find it in someone else’s bibliography doesn’t mean it’s a valid source.

1. Evaluating your sources
   * It is **very** important to analyze the quality of your sources before beginning your paper. The quality of the information you use will reflect on the quality of the paper you write.
   * How do I critically analyze my sources? If you are unsure, a great place to start is Cornell University’s website (<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill26.htm>). This will give you an excellent idea of how you should be reviewing your sources.
   * What about websites? There are a few excellent places you can go to help you determine the quality of an Internet source. You can use Cornell’s site (<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/webeval.html>). There are several excellent suggestions there as well as links to other Internet source evaluation resources. Remember, checking the credibility of websites is *your responsibility*.

1. Cite what you find using a standard format
   * Citing or documenting the sources used in your research serves two purposes: it gives proper credit to the authors of the materials used, and it allows those who are reading your work to duplicate your research and locate the sources that you have listed as references. Knowingly representing the work of others as your own is **plagiarism**.

        The IB doesn’t really care what citation format you use as long as you are consistent. For many Literature and Humanities papers, the standard citation style is Modern Language Association (MLA). For science papers, the more accepted style is American Psychological Association (APA). The library has current guides on both for you to access. NOTE: citation style guides are updated on a regular basis, so make sure you are using the most recent edition of the style guide.

* + You should be creating an annotated bibliography as you research. Keep your citation information in proper format so you don’t realize 6 months from now that you are missing an author’s name and you can no longer find the source.
  + If you print or copy journal articles, write the citation information along the top and keep your articles organized. This will help you when you are writing your paper and help to demonstrate academic honesty to your supervisor

1. Research Tips
   * Work from the general to the specific - find background information first, then use more specific and recent sources.
   * Record what you find and where you found it - record the complete citation for each source you find; you may need it again later.